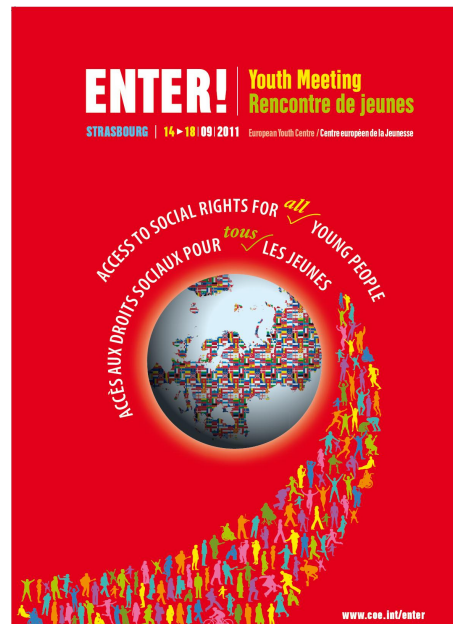




DJS/Enter! Meeting (2011) 10

MESSAGE

to the Council of Europe



This message was developed by the participants of the Enter! Youth Meeting that was held in the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg from 14 to 18 September 2011. The meeting gathered 180 young people, youth workers, youth researchers and policy makers to share their experiences and voice their opinions and expectations about access to social rights as a contribution to the development of the youth policy in the Council of Europe. Enter! is a project developed by the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe aiming at improving the access to social rights for young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

We, the participants of the *Enter!* Youth Meeting, want to share our experiences and views about the access to social rights for all young people. Sharing similar experiences of growing up in Europe, many of us in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, we want to highlight the difficulties young people have in accessing their social rights.

All young people in Europe today should grow up and live under the protection of the Council of Europe's human rights system. The 50th anniversary of the European Social Charter is an opportunity to make it more effective for the future generations. As active and committed young people, we are concerned about the living conditions and prospects for many young people across Europe today, especially those whose human rights are most threatened or denied, such as young people living in segregated and disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

United by similar needs and expectations caused by the stage of life we are in, young people form a group in society that needs specific political attention. This is not always recognised and we are seldom seen as political partners in decision-making that concerns our situation. Instead, we are often portrayed in negative terms, seen as the problem rather than part of the solution. This is wrong!

We are united also by the experiences of failed policies and more importantly by our daily local actions; we need your help in support through the implementation of tangible and long-term measures for and by young people. Allow us and the future generations to fully enjoy our social rights!

Recognise us, for we're the solution

We are committed to making a positive change in our communities; we expect the Council of Europe and its member states to be equally committed to improving the access to social rights for all young people through:

1. Implementing sustainable youth policies at local and national level that are based on social rights
2. Raising the attention of member states to the challenges faced by young people in accessing their social rights and to call upon them to seriously address them
3. Regular and consistent monitoring of the obstacles young people face in accessing their human rights at local, national and European level, notably through national youth policy reviews, and involving non-governmental youth organisations
4. Realising and valuing the potential and creativity of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, including in the artistic, social, and cultural fields
5. Setting up and supporting local youth councils and youth advisory mechanisms as examples of good practice and to ensure democratic participation as well as the involvement of local authorities
6. Facilitating closer communication and cooperation between decision-makers and young people
7. Providing human rights education through formal and non-formal education, including accessible and decentralised information about the rights in the European Social Charter

8. Securing the right to free education, through the provision of quality education and vocational training for all - regardless of legal status - advise and counselling for young people and the democratic governance of schools
9. Ensuring that all schools are a supportive environment for learning and free from violence
10. Providing quality and affordable public services, especially in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, including free health care, affordable housing, access to water and sanitation
11. Paying special attention to gender-based discrimination, particularly the obstacles to the equal participation of young women
12. Effectively addressing discrimination, stigma and prejudices that young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods face, including the combined effects of multiple discriminations
13. Adopting specific measures to secure the rights of young people with disabilities and particularly vulnerable groups such as Roma, the homeless, offenders and those in care institutions
14. Paying particular attention to ensuring social rights of young undocumented migrants, asylum-seekers, internal displaced people and refugees
15. Launching a Europe-wide youth campaign against all forms of discrimination and racism
16. Promoting and creating opportunities for intercultural and interreligious dialogue and exchange in public spaces such as schools, community, culture, leisure and sport centres
17. Addressing the causes of exclusion and violence through prevention, not punishment and repression
18. Recognising the role of youth work and of young people in promoting social rights and providing accessible funding and support for their projects through simplified procedures
19. Developing specific programmes for employment and entrepreneurship of young people
20. Promoting and supporting youth mobility programmes addressed to young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Youth meetings like the one we have attended at the European Youth Centre are exceptional learning opportunities. The outcomes of the Enter! project need to be consolidated and followed up. More young people in Europe should benefit from projects and meetings like this.

Exclusion, violence and discrimination are not inevitable.